



CITY OF SAN MATEO

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Agenda Report

Agenda Number: 8

Section Name: {{section.name}}

File ID: {{item.tracking_number}}

TO: City Council
FROM: Drew Corbett, City Manager
PREPARED BY: Public Works Department
MEETING DATE: December 06, 2021

SUBJECT:
School Zones – Speed Reduction

RECOMMENDATION:

Adopt a Resolution to reduce the posted speed limit to be consistent with State law in school zones.

BACKGROUND:

Council's strategic plan prioritizes the implementation of bicycle and pedestrian projects that address safety issues. Part of this objective includes evaluating school zone speed limit reductions to address quality-of-life and safety within neighborhoods. Speed limit reductions in school zones can help reduce the risk of severe or fatal conflicts between vehicles and active transportation users (e.g., cyclists and pedestrians) and can also help promote students and families walking or biking to school.

The California Vehicle Code (CVC) governs how speed limits are established and grants local jurisdictions the authority to establish certain speed limits on qualified streets as follows:

- 15 miles per hour (mph) school zones contiguous to the school and within 500 feet of a school boundary; and
- 25 mph school zones between 500 feet and 1000 feet from a school boundary

The CVC also defines the criteria that must be satisfied for these speed limits to be implemented. CVC 22358.4(b) permits 15 mph school zones and extended 25 mph school zones on streets that satisfy the following conditions:

1. No more than two through traffic lanes
2. A posted speed limit of 30 mph or lower
3. Within a residence district (as defined by the CVC); and
4. Contiguous to a school

Pursuant to the CVC, implementation of 15 mph school zones and extended 25 mph school zones on qualified streets require Engineering and Traffic Studies (E&TS), adoption of an ordinance or resolution by the Council, and installation of appropriate signage. The reduced speed limits are in effect while children are present outside the school, including drop-off and pick-up times and recess periods.

Council Policy Direction

In October 2021, staff presented information on school zone speed limits to Council during a study session. Council unanimously supported the program, with the following specific policy parameters:

- Location: Implement at qualified streets associated with all K-12 schools identified in the city boundaries

- Implementation: Phase construction to ensure outreach and education is appropriate for each implementation
- Funding: Appropriate funding from current similar projects to this effort to support immediate initiation for design and construction

Based on State law and Council direction, staff conducted the necessary Engineering and Traffic Studies required for implementation and identified roadways contiguous to schools that meet the CVC criteria for implementation. Staff evaluated all K-12 schools within the jurisdictional boundaries to determine qualified roadways for implementation. Staff has identified a total of 38 roadway segments contiguous to 23 schools that qualify for speed limit reductions. The schools and roadway segments are identified in Attachment 2. In accordance with State law, staff has prepared a local resolution to authorize the reduction of posted speed limits in school zones. The specific street segments in Attachment 2 are also included in the resolution.

Next Steps

Following Council adoption of a resolution and in accordance with prior direction to phase the implementation, staff will commence the design of the school zone speed limit effort and begin coordination with the appropriate school districts on an outreach and education strategy. Following Council adoption, the appropriate signage will be installed along qualified roadway segments pursuant to the CVC requirements.

Per Council feedback, staff will also evaluate the potential to expand this program to other school types including preschools and daycares. If allowed by State law, staff will bring an update to Council for review following the implementation of the initial K-12 program.

BUDGET IMPACT:

Staff identified the Neighborhood Traffic Management (NTM) project account as a potentially appropriate source of funding for the project. The goal of the NTM is to address neighborhood traffic concerns, which include excessive vehicle speeds near schools. As such, staff proposes to include the School Zone Speed Limits project into the NTM. There is sufficient funding in this project to cover the costs for this initiative.

ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION:

The reduction of speed limits near school zones is exempt from CEQA review under the commonsense exemption because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility reducing vehicle speeds limits near schools may have a significant effect on the environment. (CEQA Guidelines section 15061(b)(3).) On an independent basis, the reduction of speed limits near schools is also exempt from CEQA review as an “existing facility” because it concerns minor alterations of an existing public street system that involves no expansion of use. (CEQA Guidelines section 15301.)

NOTICE PROVIDED

All meeting noticing requirements were met.

ATTACHMENTS

Att 1 – Proposed Resolution

Att 2 – School Zone Speed Reduction Location Map

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